

DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

A monthly magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers.

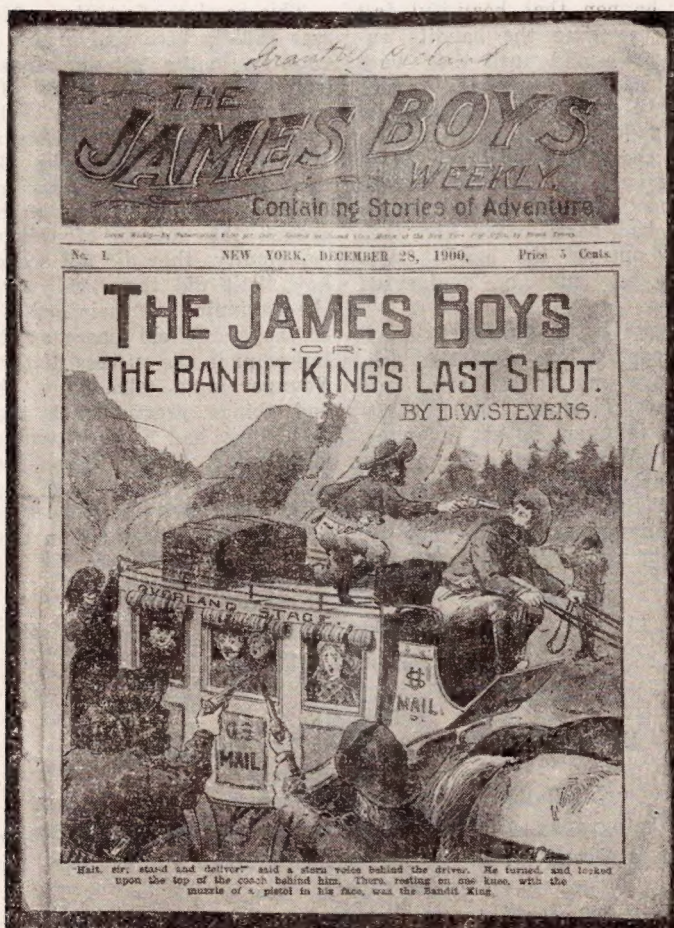
Vol. 23 No. 11

November 15, 1955

Whole No. 278

The Northfield Bank Robbery

by Roy E. Swanstrom



The first number of James Boys Weekly published by Frank Tousey.
(From the dime novel picture collection of Charlie Duprez)

The Northfield Bank Robbery

by Roy E. Swanstrom

BANK ROBBERY— THE FIRST NATIONAL BANK OF NORTHFIELD, MINNESOTA

If you lived in or near Northfield, Minn., you might have read these headlines as my father did in the St. Paul papers on September 7, 1876. Much has been written about this famous incident, perhaps a great deal was only fiction and some may have elaborated beyond their own imaginations.

I would like to relate here just what did happen that beautiful fall day from the time the bandits entered the town and until they were caught, tried, imprisoned and finally to the death of the last member in 1915. Some doubt was raised at the time that the James brothers, Jesse and Frank actually took part in the robbery, but later on it was shown that they had participated and that Jesse was one of the bandits who went into the bank and engineered the deal.

There were eight members in all who took part in this attempted robbery without any doubt: Jesse and Frank James, Thomas (Cole) Younger, James Younger, Robert Younger, Clel Miller, Wm. Stiles (alias Chadwell), Charles Pitts (alias George Wells). Bill Stiles was originally from southern Minnesota in Rice county,

which takes in Northfield. He also had a bad reputation as a small time horse thief around Rice County before he joined up with the James-Younger gang, and it was perhaps through Stiles that moving into southern Minnesota came about—for things were getting a little hot for the James-Younger boys around Clay County, Missouri. The law had been on their trail several times, and it was getting more difficult to operate in the home territory.

This section of southern Minnesota was rapidly becoming a rich farming country. In the fall the banks of this section would have a lot of money on hand after farmers sold their crops. I presume Bill Stiles sold the rest of the gang on the idea that here they would find easy pickings.

History shows how badly they misjudged the natives of this farming community; they did not scare easily; how little did they realize this was the beginning of their end. I consider the Northfield fiasco as the turning point in the success of the James-Younger gang, who, up to this time had things pretty much their own way. They had held up several banks and trains, killing anyone who got in their way without much opposition. True, they had the Pinkertons and a few railroad detectives on their trail,

DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

Vol. 23 No. 11

November 15, 1955

Whole No. 278

Published Monthly at

821 Vermont Street, Lawrence, Kansas

Edited by

Edward T. LeBlanc, 36 Taylor St., Fall River, Mass.

Assistant Editor

Ralph F. Cummings, Fisherville, Mass.

Asst. Ed. Photography—Charles Duprez, 228 Larch Lane, Smithtown, L.I., N.Y.

Entered as second-class matter at the post office at Lawrence, Kansas

Price \$2.00 per year

Ad Rates — 6c per word. \$1.00 per inch, quarter page \$2.25, half page \$3.00 and Full Page \$5.00. — 4 times for the price of three.

Ads should be submitted by the 15th of the month in order to assure publication in the following month's issue.

but they had not met with any resistance, defiance or actual clash with their victims or the citizens at the scene of the banditry. Here at Northfield, Minnesota, they found a different type of opposition; they found the average business man ready, and willing, I might say anxious, to shoot it out with them with anything they could lay their hands on, old out of date firearms, yes, even some picked up rocks in the street and threw them at the mounted bandits as they rode up and down the street trying to terrify the citizens.

I don't think the James-Younger boys would have been so successful in their plundering activities if their friends and neighbors down around Clay County, Missouri, were not so cooperative and uncommunicative to keep their whereabouts a mystery when the law came around.

The James-Younger gang started traveling north up from Missouri and through Iowa the later part of the summer of 1876; they wore long dusters to help keep their artillery under cover. In those days it was common dress for men who traveled horseback. The roads were dusty and these long light weight coats kept the road dirt and dust off the regular attire underneath and in this case it did a double purpose. They posed as cattle buyers going through the country looking to buy livestock and horse flesh. They spent part of late summer in southern Minnesota and were seen in St. Paul gambling houses, one of their men getting into trouble and having to spend a night in jail, but their real purpose was to look over the territory for possible banks to rob and acquaint themselves with roads for getaways and hideouts. Their plan was to rob the First National Bank of Mankato, Minnesota which is located about forty-five miles southwest of Northfield, then perhaps hide out for a while, then pick off another bank in this section of the country. The Mankato bank was one of the wealthier banks and offered them greater spoils. It is situated in the midst of a rich farming country and would have large

funds on hand in the fall of the year, right after the farmers had sold their crops and had money to pay off loans to the bank and deposit any surplus funds they had received from their harvest.

The only thing that saved the Mankato bank the pleasure of a visit by this gang of thieves was that the day they arranged for a rendezvous at the bank there was a building project going on right next door to the bank and the street was crowded with spectators watching excavations for the new building. They left and came back the next day only to find the street again full of people standing around looking at the building project. They were a little skeptical whether the crowd had gathered because someone knew of their intentions and they decided that it would not be too good an idea to try and stage a bank robbery and make a getaway with so many people on the street. They then decided to rob the Northfield bank instead. They had visited Northfield 10 or 12 days before looking it over and now changed their plans. This was on Sept. 4, 1876; three days later, Sept. 7, the fatal day, the gang met in a wood west of the town of Northfield for final arrangements before the robbery. They now split up into small groups not wanting to be seen together nor wanting to arouse any suspicion if they should meet anyone on the road.

During the forenoon of September 7 after their meeting in the woods several of the gang were seen around town during which time they visited a few of the local stores making a few minor purchases as any stranger might make. At noon at least five of the gang had lunch in a restaurant in the west end of town and took their time sitting around. About 2 o'clock three more horsemen rode into town from the west, crossing a bridge which spans the Cannon River. They came along past Bridge Square and dismounted in front of the First National Bank and walked their horses up to a hitching post, then casually walked to some dry goods boxes on the sidewalk in front of Lee & Hitch-

cock's General Store and sat down. They seemed to be watching the townspeople going about their duties. In a little while two or more horsemen appeared on the scene coming up from the south end of town on Division Street. Here we now have Jesse, Pitts and Bob Younger sitting on the dry goods boxes and Cole and Miller on the street. They kept on walking their horses towards the bank and the three sitting on the dry goods boxes got up and hightailed it for the back door of the bank.

Miller rode up to the front of the bank and looked in; in the meanwhile Cole Younger got off his horse in the middle of the street, pretending to be adjusting his saddle girth, but in reality he was signing up the situation down the street. This act attracted some of the townspeople.

The hardware dealer, a Mr. J. S. Allen, whose store was just west of the bank thought something looked queer and became suspicious. He walked up to the front of the bank where he was challenged by Clel Miller, who was now standing guard at the bank's front door. He told Allen to get going and stay out of the bank. Miller tried to hold Allen, who broke away and ran toward his hardware store yelling as loud as he could that the bank was being robbed and for the boys to get their guns.

Across the street just east of the bank was Wheeler's drug store. His son, H. M. Wheeler, was home on summer vacation from Michigan University where he was a medical student. He sat on a bench in front of his father's drug store and he also became curious when he saw Miller tussle with Allen. He got up and walked down the street opposite the bank; pretty soon he noticed Allen running away from Miller. He also picked up the cry that the bank was being robbed.

After Wheeler and Allen started hollering, Cole Younger and Miller got on their horses and started riding up and down the street in front of the bank shouting warnings for everyone to get off the street at the same time encouraging them with

continuous shooting. They were soon joined by three more members of the gang.

During the turmoil in the street the townspeople scurried for cover. Some were able to get inside stores, others got behind cover that offered them some protection from flying bullets except one Nichols Gustafson, a newly arrived Swedish emigrant who did not comprehend the meaning of the disturbance in the street. He was shot down in cold blood by one of the horsemen in the street.

All the while the bandits were trying to keep the townspeople off the streets, things were not faring too well for the bandits inside the bank. The bank employees were not as cooperative as bank employees of previous robberies. Sticking a gun in the face of the bank clerks did not bring the results they had expected. When they entered the bank the employees were busy with their various tasks. A. E. Bunker, the bank teller, saw them come in and he approached them thinking they were customers. He was greeted by three pistols pointed at him and was ordered to throw up his hands. The three bandits then jumped over the counter and covered the other employees. One of the bandits informed that they were holding up the bank and not to make any outcry as they had forty men outside. One of the bandits (perhaps Jesse) pointed a gun at the bookkeeper, a Mr. Joseph Heywood, who at the time was acting cashier. Mr. G. N. Philipps, the regular cashier, was away attending the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia (our country was celebrating its 100th anniversary from 1776-1876) which perhaps saved his life. The bandit asked Heywood if he was the cashier. He told him he was not. Jesse then turned to the other employees asking who the cashier was. Not getting any information he came back to Heywood and said he was the cashier. "I know it. Now get busy and open that safe—be damn quick about it or I'll blow your head off." Charley Pitts, one of the other bandits, then moved over toward Jesse who was directing the holdup near the vault.

Heywood now moved toward the vault trying to close the door. He was pulled away by one of the bandits. They stuck their guns in his face and told him to open the safe or he would not have another minute to live. Heywood remarked that he could not open the safe as it had a time lock and could not be opened at that time (whereas the truth of the matter was that the safe was not even locked but the door was just closed and the combination had not been spun. The bandits could have opened it by simply turning the handle, open the door and picked up a nice haul) but Heywood had them bluffed and he intended to stick by it.

The bandits then dragged Heywood around the office and he started yelling murder. The bandits then struck him a blow on the head with their pistols. Heywood fell to the floor, but they still insisted that he open the safe. They then turned to Mr. Bunker and another employee, a Mr. Wilcox, and insisted that they open the safe. They told him they could not open it.

They finally tried to force Heywood to open it and while he was lying on the floor Pitts stuck his gun close to Heywood's head and fired it (this was the first shot fired inside the bank). The bullet passed into the vault and went through a small tin box which contained some customer's jewelry. Bob Younger now had Bunker and Wilcox down on their knees under the counter. From his position Bunker tried several times to get himself free and finally did when Bob Younger's face was turned the other way. He managed to make a dash through the directors' room and succeeded in getting out the back way. Pitts noticed him going out and took a shot at him, the bullet just whizzed by his ear. Pitts then fired again, this time hitting Bunker in the shoulder bone but he kept on going. Pitts then gave up the chase and returned to the others in the bank. He heard one of the bandits shout from the front door that the game was up and they had better get out. "They are killing all our men". The three bandits in the bank rushed into the

street. The last one, Jesse, as he climbed over the counter deliberately shot Heywood thru the head as he was on his feet staggering towards his desk. He then grabbed a small sack of cash (about \$290) and went through the door to the street where a battle royal was going on.

Young Wheeler, the druggist's son, had crossed the street and got upstairs of the Dampier Hotel which is across from the bank. Here he got a good view of what was going on in the street below. He had hold of an old army carbine rifle with which he was making pretty good use. In the meantime Mr. Allen, the hardware merchant, who Miller had tussled with when he tried to get into the bank managed to get back to his hardware store, where he got together guns and ammunition and passed them out to the citizens. R. Manning, another hardware merchant, armed himself with an old breech loading rifle. Everyone by this time was off the streets and the other five bandits were riding herd up one side and down the other side of the street doing their utmost to frighten the citizenry who didn't scare quite as easily as they would have liked them.

Capt. H. S. French, the postmaster, managed to lock up the postoffice. Justice of the Peace Streeter and Elia Hobbs started to throw rocks at the bandits. Just as Clel Miller was mounting his horse, Elias Stacy fired an old gun with a load of fine buckshot right in Miller's face. It marked his face but not seriously. Manning and Wheeler were really doing a fine job tormenting the bandits and put them to flight.

Manning stepped out of his store, took a shot at one of the horses belonging to one of the bandits in the bank, then stepped back inside to reload. He then stepped around a corner, took aim at Cole Younger who was between the bank and their horses, and fired. Stepping back again to reload, he saw Bill Stiles sitting on his horse about 70 or 80 yards away. Taking good aim he plugged him through the heart. He fell off his

horse dead. About this time the battle was in full swing. Wheeler was a busy boy up in the second floor of the Dampier hotel. His first shot at Jim Younger as he rode by was too high, so next he took a pot shot at Miller, the bullet passed through his body severing an artery, killing him instantly. About this time Cole Younger rode up to the front door of the bank warning the three bandits inside that things were not going according to plan. They had never run up against anything like this before in their lawless escapades, here was a new type of small town business men who were willing to fight it out with them on their own terms, blood for blood and bullets for bullets without any prearranged dress rehearsal.

So far the bandits had not accomplished anything they had planned. The bank employees had not submitted, they were outwitted in the holdup in the bank. Businessmen on the street had only got off the streets in order to get hold of firearms and to seek some point of vantage to take shots at the bandits. So far the bandits had lost two men, both laying dead in the street and one horse was out of commission. When Boy Younger came out of the bank there was no horse for him. In the meantime Wheeler and Manning had reloaded and were ready for more action. Bob Younger came running, Manning raised his rifle to take a shot at Bob. He reached for his pistol, they both dodged by putting an outside stairway between them—playing a game of hide and seek. Wheeler could not get a good view of Bob but took a pot shot at him and succeeded in shattering the elbow bone in Bob's right arm. Bob nonchalantly put his pistol in his left hand and continued trying to get a shot at Manning. Now while Wheeler was reloading and Manning changing his position, Bob Younger ran out, and jumped up behind his brother Cole and the two rode out of town on one horse together with what was left of the bandit gang. The battle was over for the time being. It had lasted

an exciting seven minutes—what a seven minutes that was for the notorious James-Younger gang of outlaws. Never before in their career of crime had they met such opposition. The robbery was a failure with two of their members dead—killed by a few small town businessmen—not a brave tale for the famous brigands from Missouri, who were now running for their lives, licking their wounds. Their getaway was only temporary, their tangle with the natives of southern Minnesota was just beginning. They were in for some much rougher treatment before many moons. The murders of Joe Heywood and Nichols Gustafson were still fresh in the minds of the natives.

Mr. Joseph Heywood was a very prominent citizen in Northfield, being the town treasurer as well as treasurer of the Carlton College of Northfield. His death was mourned by all of Northfield and vicinity. Nichols Gustafson was not so well known, having arrived from Sweden shortly before he was shot down. If he had some knowledge of the English language, chances are he would have comprehended what was taking place and could have gotten out of the way before bullets started flying.

The body of Clel Miller lay in front of the bank, and the body of Bill Stiles lay in the street half a block away. The bandits left Northfield by the south road towards the next small town of Dundas. They rode three abreast occupying the whole road—making everyone else get off the road into the ditches. They had not gone far before they stopped at Philipp Emey's farm. Entering the farm yard they slugged the hired man who was driving a team of horses. They unhitched one of the horses, helped themselves to a saddle. Now they had a horse for Bob Younger. Bob's arm by this time was giving him considerable trouble. At four-thirty they reached the town of Millerburg where some of them had stayed the night before. They were recognized but were still ahead of the news of the bank robbery. Back at Northfield the gang was not out of sight before the

citizenry were on their trail. The law officers at Northfield immediately telegraphed St. Paul and Minneapolis for help in tracking down the bandits. Soon posses were formed at St. Paul and Minneapolis. A special train carried them to Northfield. The railroads cooperated with the law officers (you know it was the railroads who were most anxious to put the James-Younger gang behind bars due to their previous raids on the railroads down Missouri way so it was no trouble to get help from the railroads out of both cities). Several times during that first afternoon the posse was in sight of the bandits. Once at the Emey farm and also at Shieldsville, 15 miles west of Northfield. Another posse was formed at Faribault, this being the first large town to the south of Northfield and also the county seat. This posse had arrived in advance of the oncoming bandit gang. The posse stopped at a farm house to have something to eat. While the posse was inside this farm house eating, the bandit gang rode into the farm yard to water their horses at the pump. They saw all the posse's guns lined up on the porch of the farmhouse (the posse was a little uneasy sitting in the farm house eating with the bandit gang out in the yard watering their horses). The bandits rode away as soon as they had watered their horses, not wishing to engage in any further fighting. This posse did overtake the bandits at Shieldsville and an exchange of shots took place, but no damage to the bandits who got away.

Later a more systemized hunt was organized. By nightfall over 200 men were on the trail of the bandits and the next day over 500 men were in on the hunt. Later that number swelled to over a thousand men. This large group got to be more of a hindrance than a help, many just went along for the reward being offered by the Northfield Bank, the Railroad and by the Governor of the State of Minnesota.

Picket lines were set up in advance of their flight, every road was patrolled, scouting parties were put out

to run them down. By this time the bandits were not holding to the main roads but were using side roads, anything to throw off the posses that seemed to be at every crossroad laying in wait for them. Things were very tough on the bandit gang that first afternoon after the robbery. News spread fast over the telegraph wires in southern Minnesota. Sheriffs, town police, marshalls, all were on the lookout, all were well armed. During the next four or five hours the bandits succeeded in getting to what was known as the big woods, a very large stand of hard timber just outside of the town of Shieldsville. Here they camped over night—a scouting party had noticed where they had camped the next day.

After a night in the woods they started moving west in the direction of the town of Waterville. The scouting party figured now there were four men and four horses in the gang who had camped overnight in the woods. That meant only one thing, that two of the bandits had either died from wounds or were traveling alone. This proved to be true. Jesse and Frank James had separated from the rest of the gang leaving the three Younger boys and Pitts together. This move proved to be very smart on the part of the James boys. It saved them being put behind prison bars and gave them an opportunity to get back to Missouri.

The part of the gang which had camped in the big woods later the next day forded the Cannon river and disappeared in a woods beyond the river. Later that day they went on through the small town of Elysian in Le Sueur county. That night they camped near German lake not far from the town of Elysian. The following morning they must have figured that by traveling horseback was attracting too much attention. They therefore tied up their horses and went ahead on foot. They did not move very far that day, just far enough to find a good hiding place in a large swamp on an island. They camped the rest of the day, perhaps nursing their wounds which must

have been hampering their progress.

After a rest during the day, as darkness set in, they continued all night through Le Sueur county. At daylight they found themselves near the village of Marysberg. Not daring to go through the village, they had to go around it through woods and fields. They made about four miles south where they camped for a while. After resting they continued walking west nine miles. They got within three miles of Mankato (the town they had originally planned on robbing—they perhaps now wished they had stuck to their original plan. It could not have turned out any worse than the fizzle at Northfield where everything went amiss).

About three miles east of Mankato they stopped at a deserted farmhouse where they holed up for two days and nights. So far they had gotten only fifty miles from Northfield, scene of the crime. It was now five days after the robbery, and this was a very poor record compared with their fast getaways down Missouri way. The reason of course was the many scouting parties and posses that were out on a lookout for them—something they never had to worry too much about down around Clay County, Missouri. When they were on one of their pillaging expeditions, everyone seemed to be afraid to cross the path of the James-Younger gang—but up here in Minnesota every able bodied man who owned a gun was itching to get a shot at them. A few days later a lot of them did. Even at their slow pace they did very well in being able to forage enough food to live and keep out of the posse's gunsights.

On Tuesday morning a posse found their half starved horses and deserted camp near German Lake, where they had left them the preceding Saturday morning. After finding the horses some of the posse became discouraged, figuring they had got away so they left the rest of the posse and headed back to their homes. The next day, Wednesday, news got to Mankato that the bandits were not far from the town. A new posse was

quickly formed under the supervision of General E. M. Pope. Patrols were sent out. All avenues of escape were cut off. Police officers from St. Paul and Minneapolis now joined with General Pope. With all the precautions they had taken, the bandits managed to slip through their lines. They escaped by crossing the Blue Earth river on a railroad bridge at Mankato, a guard on duty at the bridge took a shot at two of them (perhaps Jesse and Frank James) who were mounted on one horse, but they got away. Their horse reared, and they both toppled off and made their escape on foot. The guard picked up a hat one had dropped. It had a hole shot through the crown. That is how close one of the bandits came to getting killed at the bridge. Later these two stole a pair of fine grey horses. This gave them an opportunity of making much better time. Being only two, they were not suspected of being part of the bandit gang. These two, assumed to be the James boys, enrolled with one of the posses chasing the bandits. Whenever they met anyone, they inquired about the bandits. In this way they were able to get food for themselves and their horses. By traveling night and day they soon got to the South Dakota border. On Sept. 17, 1876 they crossed into South Dakota and then into Iowa—at Sioux City, Iowa, they forced a Doctor Sidney Mosher, Sr., to give Frank James medical assistance as he had been badly hurt in the leg at Northfield. He also made the doctor change clothes with him. They then made their way in a southwesterly direction in South Dakota where they crossed the river at Springfield and continued as far south as Columbus, Nebraska. Here they made a deal for the sale of the two grey horses they had stolen near Mankato, Minnesota.

After getting cash for the horses, they bought some new store clothes, got cleaned up and assumed the role of two businessmen. They boarded a train for Omaha, Nebraska. From Omaha they maneuvered their way back to Clay County where they felt a lot safer among their home haunts

than they did among the back roads of southern Minnesota.

Rumors had it that they went to Texas. Officers were sent there to pick them up, but what really happened was that they rested a bit in Clay County, then went to Tennessee where they lived a quiet life under assumed names for some time.

In the meantime the hunt for the bandits still continued in southern Minnesota. After a few more days it became somewhat of a joke "out looking for the James-Younger bandit gang." The search was not going too good. It was practically given up—everybody thought that the gang had given them the slip and interest sort of petered out.

But, on Sept. 21, 1876, this was exactly two weeks after the robbery had taken place, a young Norwegian farm boy near Madelia, Minnesota, had met two strangers on the road who he thought might be some of the bandits. He told his father who told him to forget it because it could not have been and not waste any more time trying to run down bank robbers. But the boy was insistent, and over his father's protests took a horse and rode eight miles into Madelia and notified some of the citizens and Sheriff James Glispin of Watonwan County. Sheriff Glispin immediately formed a posse of men who were not afraid to shoot it out with anyone. They started out and located the bandit gang making their way on foot through what is known as the Hanska slough. It was connected with Hanska Lake sometimes known as Long Lake. They crossed the slough and tried to pick up some horses without any success. Glispin's posse managed to get them corraled in a sort of triangle of land consisting of about five acres. It was covered with a heavy growth of willow, wild plum, elders and grape vines, making a pretty good cover for a hideout. It layed between the Watonwan river and a high bluff on the other side. The posse drove them into this thicket of vines and grove. Now the sheriff ordered his men to surround them, then a Captain Murphy called for volunteers

to go in after them. Six men responded, namely Sheriff Glispin, B. M. Rice, G. A. Bradford, C. A. Pomeroy, Col. T. L. Vought, and S. J. Severson; these six men stretched out about 30 feet and advanced toward the thicket where the bandits were hiding. When they got to within 30 feet they opened fire. The bandits returned the shots. The battle was short and fast with plenty of shots being exchanged. Bradford and Severson were clipped, Captain Murphy also got a shot in the side but the ball glanced off of a briar pipe he had in his pocket and lodged in his pistol belt.

Over among the bandits Bob Younger was badly shot in the chest, his brother Jim had five wounds and Cole had eleven, Pitts was laying dead being hit five times. When they were ordered to surrender, Bob Younger yelled out and said they were all down but him and not to shoot any more, they would give up.

One of the posse went to a nearby farmer's house and got a team and wagon to carry the wounded and the dead Charley Pitts back to town. On Sept. 23 they were delivered to Sheriff Ara Barton of Rice County and taken to Faribault, the county seat and lodged in jail.

They were tried in the county court house at Faribault, Minnesota. They had good attorneys representing them and their wives and families came up from Clay County, Missouri, to try to comfort and plead for them. They were given a fair trial. On November 9, 1876, a little over two months after the attempted robbery at Northfield, the three Younger brothers were given life sentences to be served at the Minnesota State Penitentiary at Stillwater.

They were indicted on four counts by a grand jury, the first charge being an accessory to the murder of Joseph Heywood, the temporary cashier at the bank, the second charge was the attacking of Mr. Bunker, the teller at the bank, and third with the robbing of the Northfield bank. Cole Younger was indicted as principal and his brothers as accessories to the

killing of the emigrant, Nicholas Gustafson.

All three pleaded guilty to these charges—all three were sentenced to life imprisonment. They were sent to the prison at Stillwater immediately after the trial.

Charlie Bragin, writing Ed Leithead about his James Boys article in the Sept. issue, gives much additional and valuable information on the subject:

"The James Boys Weekly, of course all reprints as you state, but all were written by Musick or Lu Senarens or others, but NOT by Doughty. The Doughty J. B. novels were about the James Boys and Old King Brady—and Tousey was then publishing Secret Service weekly, and didn't want the young readers to have a Brady of the 'eighties'.

"The James Boys Weekly was published rather "sub-rosa", because this was a period of "mild" Merriwell type novels. As you know, Tousey printed on back of his weeklies (color covers) titles of other of his weeklies for mail order business. But the James Boys Weekly was usually omitted. Tousey did not solicit mail orders for this weekly. Also, at first, the illustrations were the old dime novel type—bandits flourishing guns, "hands up" stuff, etc.

"Then Tousey cut out the wild and woolly pictures, and of all artists, selected his comic illustrator, Tom Worth, to do the job, and the pictures became terrifically funny, caricatures. Tom Worth did the illustrations for the Comic Library and later Snaps. One of his James Boys Weekly illustrations is about the funniest in dime novels—it shows an exhibition of wax figures in a "dime museum" of the James Boys—the figures are just "howls", and the exhibitor is showing them off to a man who, unknown to him, is Jesse James.

"This sub-rosa output is the reason why so few fine copies of the James Boys Weekly turn up. Readers who were allowed to read Merriwell, etc. openly, read James Boys in secret,

usually folding the copy in 4 folds to carry in a back pocket. And when Tousey stopped publishing, there was no stock of numbers to throw on the market. Tousey evidently just printed enough to sell, and carried nothing in stock of this weekly."

NEWSY NEWS

By Ralph F. Cummings

Ed Leithead became a grandfather for the second time recently with the birth of Ellen Patricia to his son Bill Cody Leithead.

Denis R. Rogers, Edward T. LeBlanc and Clyde F. Wakefield were here Sunday afternoon, October 9th, and we all had a very nice time of exchanging views on the old times, and what not. Denis was able to get quite a lot of his Ellis wants from me, and he says the more he gets into it, the more complicated it gets, but as he is over half way now, he's sure it won't be too hard a job to run down the rest of them. Although it will be tough on trying to find some of them we know, so we all wish Denis the very best, and that he'll be able to locate all there is to be had. Ellis wrote under so many nom de plumes, it's got a fellow wondering how he did it. Must have wrote 8 days a week, and all in between at that, unless he had a typewriter, and still there were no typewriters in those early days. He must have had a brain and a half to do it; sure is wonderful of what he did. That evening I went back with Denis and Ed to Fall River, as I'd had to work the next day. Denis and I went book hunting in Fall River, no luck, so we boarded a bus for Providence. We found plenty of books there, but they were scarce on the Ellis and the kind I was interested in. So we went back to Fall River. Next day we went over Ed's collection of Frank Leslie's Boys and Girls Weekly, looking for Ellis stories—quite a lot of them were found in those weeklies. That night Ed. drove Denis and myself back here, let me off, then drove to Boston, where Denis was to catch the flyer from Boston to Montreal. Then Ed. drove

home. His wife and the youngster were with him. I thank Ed. and his folks for all they have done for me, all around, ever since I've known them. They've been wonderful to me.

On October 24th Eli A. Messier and Ernest Beique were here, and we had quite a confab and talk on old books.

George French struck luck when he landed 141 rare old nickel and dime novels up in Maine, not too long ago, such as Old Caps, N. Y. Detective, Nick Carters, Wide Awakes, Old Sleuth, Log Cabins, Bob Brooks, War, Beadles and a Union Library. Lucky dog, I'll say. How'd you do it, George?

George says if you take Yankee Magazine, no doubt you have seen his first series of New England Villages. It is Kennebruck, Maine. The next will be Sandwich, N. H., then will follow Grafton, Vt., and Deerfield, Mass.

Did you see where there is \$1000 offered to the one who knows the author of a famous story for children called "The Little Engine that Could" came out around 1911. If you know, write to these folks: Platt and Munk, 200 Fifth Avenue., New York. They are large publishers of books.

EXCHANGE COLUMN

Wanted—Liberty Boys of '76 between Nos. 100 to 300. Will pay fair price. Ray Mengar, 742 First Ave., San Diego 1, Calif.

MERRIWELL STORIES

Will pay \$250 for the first 60 issues of Tip Top in nice, original condition, and \$5.00 each for many Nos. between 3 and 58. Have many early and late numbers for sale.

Guinon

Box 214 Little Rock, Ark.

ST. NICHOLAS MAGAZINE

An authentic early issue of this scarce 19th Century American children's magazine. (\$2.00) Ours: \$1.00 ppd. Satisfaction or refund. Ask for our list of real book bargains.

Bob Spencer, Books
6152½ Hazelhurst Place
No. Hollywood, Calif.

Statement required by the Act of August 24, 1912 as amended by the Acts of Mar. 3, 1933 and July 2, 1946 (Title 39, United States Code, Section 233) Showing the Ownership, Management and Circulation of
Dime Novel Round-Up

published monthly at Lawrence, Kans. for October 1955.

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are:

Publisher Edward T. LeBlanc, 36 Taylor St., Fall River, Mass.

Editor, Edward T. LeBlanc, same
Managing Ed., Edw. T. LeBlanc, same
Business Mgr., Edw. T. LeBlanc, same

2. That the owner is: (If owned by a corporation, its name and address must be stated and also immediately thereunder the names and addresses of stockholders owning or holding one per cent or more of total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, the names and addresses of the individual owners must be given. If owned by a firm, company, or other unincorporated concern, its name and address, as well as those of each individual member, must be given.)

Edward T. LeBlanc, 36 Taylor St., Fall River, Mass.

3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: (If there are none, so state.)

None

Signed Edward T. LeBlanc
Sworn to and subscribed before me this 11th day of October, 1955.

(Seal) C. H. Camille Whitehead
(My commission expires May 12, 1962)

MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

- 100 Roy E. Swanstrom, 4308 2nd St. N. W., Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.
- 151 Denis R. Rogers, c/o U. K. Trade Commissioner, 1111 Beaver Hall Hill, Montreal, P. Q., Canada (New address)
- 206 Judge James A. Shanley, Judge of Probate Court, District of New Haven, New Haven, Conn. (New member)
- 112 James W. Martin, 1762 Workman St., Los Angeles, Calif. (New address)

DIME NOVELS

For Sale in Bound Volumes

- Buffalo Bill Stories (1906) 259 to 280, lacking #278. In all, 21 numbers. novels fine, binding spine chipped. \$40.00.
- Tip Top Weekly #265 to 850, all the large size Tip Tops published. Complete run in fine condition without the covers, bound in 15 large buckram volumes in nice shape. \$87.50.
- New Tip Top Weekly #1 to 35, all the large size published, in fine condition without the covers. Nice bound volume. \$4.00.
- Work and Win #1 to 13 in fair condition, all front covers bound in. Binding good. The first 13 issues. \$12.50.
- Wild West Weekly #1 to 360 complete run in fine condition without the covers. In 9 bound volumes, nice condition. \$50.00.
- Wild West Weekly #321 to 360, same as above, \$6.00.
- Tip Top Weekly #79 to 91, fine condition. 10 numbers with one color covers. 3 numbers original colored covers. Bound, in boards. \$20.00.
- Pluck and Luck #1, 32 to 52, average and good condition, without the covers. These 22 rare numbers bound in black material. \$3.50.
- Wide Awake Library #35 36 43 58 63 123 124 125 126 138 451 457 500 504 506 528 542 552 748 750 751 766 786 791 792 806 815 829 852 860 878 902 913. These 33 numbers contain 3 Frank Reade novels, a novel by Harrigan & Hart, the 3 novels of Tom Drake, and 26 adventure novels. In fine condition, bound with covers detached from spine. "The Demon of the Deep" is in here; also "Satan", as well as Mayne Reid's "Bush Boys". \$37.50.
- Secret Service (1900) #79 to 91. 13 numbers with original covers; most numbers good, a few average. Bound in red buckram. \$20.00.
- Do and Dare #1 to 12 (1900). With all original front covers bound in. Good condition. Bound in red buckram. \$20.00.
- Beadle's Dime Library #602 676 669 571 641 967 946 953 930 933 968 183. In fine condition, bound in aligator cloth and calf. Mostly novels by GILBERT PATTEN (Burt L. Standish), and Prentiss Ingraham. \$20.00.
- Beadle's Boys' Library of Sport, Story and Adventure (Ivers, 1899) #1 to 64, lacking the rare #2. Fine condition. 16 numbers have the additional colored covers, the rest in black and white, as irregularly issued that way. These are the famous adventure and biographical novels of pioneers and novel writers. Bound in 2 volumes in fine condition, in red buckram. \$45.00. Rare.
- Diamond Dick, Jr. (1901) #239 to 252, with all front covers bound in. #250 lacks the cover. Bound in red buckram. \$20.00. Large size.
- Beadle's Half-Dime Library. 33 numbers between #1 and 430 comprising ALL the Deadwood Dick, Senior, novels published. Bound in $\frac{3}{4}$ leather. \$50.00.
- Bound volumes of highwayman tales such as Claude Duval, Handsome Jack, and The Black Highwayman Novels complete, all bound without the covers, in excellent condition. Ask about them.

Postpaid.

Subject to prior sale.

RALPH P. SMITH

Box 985

Lawrence, Mass.